

FRESNO**STATE**[®]

Discovery. Diversity. Distinction.



Campus Advisors Network

“Key to Student Success” Outstanding Advisor Awards 2024-2025

Hosted by:

Dr. Xuanning Fu, Provost

**Phong Yang, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs
and Enrollment Management**

Kathy Dunbar
**Chair of the Outstanding Advisor
Awards**

Dr. Bernadette Muscat
Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Xuanning Fu
Provost

Phong Yang
Interim Vice President of
Student Affairs and
Enrollment Management

The Nominees this year...



William Arce

English Department

- I believe the best thing I do in my advising is create a psychologically safe space for students to feel heard, understood, and valued. I engage them by actively listening, meaning I try to demonstrate empathy and curiosity about the things they truly want, or about the things they think they want.
- What motivates me to support student success is serving in the role of “the revealer.” I call it “the revealer” because I feel like part of my role as an advisor is to support students as they work to discover what they truly want. To put it another way, I help them uncover what they want so they can further discover it through study. I do this while being careful to remove my footprint as much as possible throughout the process.



Chris Beck

Health and Human Services Advising & Career Development Center

As I finish up my sixth year at CHHS Advising I've really come to enjoy the unique goals the students have and the variety of majors, programs, and people within the college. I've been involved in pretty much every part of the college, from curriculum and committees to graduation every year to working one-on-one with students, and it's exposed me to a lot of very interesting and talented people. The students especially are amazing, and I'm always extremely thankful to have the opportunity to supervise students directly through our graduate advisor program where I train two graduate students to advise CHHS majors. They definitely motivate me to lead by example, but I'm also motivated by the need to provide for my three (formerly four as one just passed) doggies.



Dr. Travis Cronin

Department of Social Work Education

I stay at Fresno State because of the people here. I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of our students. It has been exciting to participate with staff and faculty to support the learning goals of our students. Every accomplishment of our students reflects the value of our university.



Paula Durette

Department of Art, Design and Art History

I still distinctly remember when I first enrolled for classes at my undergraduate university. There was virtually no support and the only advisor was completely disinterested. I started advising as a summer job when I was a graduate student. I was part of a dynamic team of students, faculty, and staff. Ever since, I have greatly enjoyed helping students navigate the roads to their goals.



Nadia Dwidar

Arts and Humanities Advising and Support Center

•My own experience as a firstborn child of immigrant parents has shown me how difficult navigating a university can be. The support I received from my academic advisors was invaluable, and I strive to be that type of an understanding, resourceful, and compassionate advisor for my students.

•Open hearted conversations – It's important to me that students feel genuinely seen and supported, not just in their role as Fresno State students, but as individuals with unique goals, challenges, and stories.

•If there's any opportunity to cuddle and love on Victor E, I'm taking that opportunity. Every. Single. Time.

•I appreciate the moments when I encounter students during my lunch break walks – it's a meaningful opportunity to reconnect in a more relaxed setting away from the office environment.



Ivy Fitzpatrick

KSOEHD – Center for Advising and Student Services

I have been advising at Fresno State for almost 11 years. I love this profession because I can connect with students on a deeper level. I am their cheerleader during their successes, and I am their support during challenging times. I get to witness them overcome incredible challenges and obstacles and grow into a more well-rounded person. I am honored to be a part of that process and do not take those connections for granted!



Juan Fonseca

Renaissance Scholars Program

I value the act and idea of "give the rod, not the fish."

The goal is to equip students with the skills and knowledge – the 'rod' – so they can navigate challenges and reel in their own unique solutions. It's about empowerment through discovery, not just providing answers – the 'fish'. Our lives and environment are always changing so learning and the ability to adapt and thrive go beyond our time together in one advising meeting. It also helps that I have a lot of stuffed animals in my office and students feel welcomed 😊.



Krista Hall

Arts and Humanities Advising and Support Center

- I LOVED college and I want my students to have a similar experience. I want them to have positive memories of their time at Fresno State. College should be a time of exploration and growth, and I want to support them through that.
- My favorite part of advising? I love all of it!. Whether I'm helping them pick classes, making graduation plans to help them reach their goals, or simply listening when they are having a rough time of it, I am grateful to have the opportunity to share in their journey.



Dr. Hillary Jones

Department of Communication

I advise undergraduates through formal academic advising, graduate students as a graduate coordinator and as a chair or member of their culminating experience committees, and our graduate community as the adviser to the Communication Graduate Student Association.

My primary goal as an adviser is to help students navigate systems and processes with as little friction as possible, to provide information transparently and proactively, and to make their time with us as productive as possible.

My favorite part of advising is helping students to develop confidence, whether building a course schedule, proposing and producing a master's thesis, or leading a group of peers in a club.



Itzel Montoya Sanchez

Department of Educational Leadership

In my role as the program advisor for the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, I actively connect with a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff through a variety of advising and support strategies. I'm especially intentional about incorporating andragogical approaches — recognizing that adult learners thrive when their learning is purposeful and directly tied to real-life challenges or personal and professional goals.

I often invite students to reflect on questions like:

- What specific issue or goal is driving your learning right now?
- How can we design an experience or resource that directly supports that goal?



Mazie Moua

Academic Success Coaching

It has been a privilege to return to Fresno State after graduating to serve and support Fresno State students. In so many of them, I see myself as a first-generation college student and can understand their successes and struggles. This is one of the reasons why I have stayed at Fresno State.

I work for an awesome program, Academic Success Coaching. What I love most is that every day is different — I get to support students holistically, learn about them as individuals, and have the privilege of being part of their academic journey. On top of that, I'm lucky to work with a truly amazing team.



Dr. Ulrike Müller

Department of Biology

I ask students to share self-care tips to help motivate everyone. Here are some of my favorites:

- Treat yourself well, while not harming others. Treat others well, while not harming yourself.
- I love you. You're probably thinking "You don't even know me." But if people can hate for no reason, I can love.
- Embarrassment is the cost of entry. If you aren't willing to look like a foolish beginner, you will never become a graceful master.
- Normality is a paved road. It's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it.



Jose Eduardo Mundo

College Assistance Migrant Program

- The vibrant community of students, colleagues, alumni, parents and friends of the university I have the pleasure to work with
- I advise for CAMP, and I work with students who come from farmworker backgrounds, the same background I come from. My dad, at age 66 still works at Taylor Farms, a packing house in San Juan Bautista, CA.
- What motivates me: The desire and ambition for more. More success stories, more students graduating, more students being the first in their family to attend college.
- Secrets to get them motivated: 1) Leading by example. 2) "*amor apache*" or "tough love." 3) voluntelling my students on what they'll be doing.



Michele Randel

Department of Construction Management

I left private practice as an architect to help educate and mentor the next generation of architects, and I couldn't be happier with that decision. I love both Fresno State and the work I've been fortunate to do in building this program and connecting with our students.

I advise all incoming community college transfer students in the program and have worked closely with 18 community colleges across the state to articulate coursework, creating a clear and accessible pathway for students with prior architecture courses.

I make it a priority to connect with my students beyond academics, helping them navigate both their educational and personal college experiences. I am proud to offer an open-door policy and strive to be a safe, welcoming space for all students. Watching them grow and succeed has brought me an immense sense of accomplishment.



Elizabeth Tinoco-Rodriguez

College of Math and Science Advising and
Resource Center

- I've been advising for 2.5 years
- Clicking with students and checking in with them throughout their time here at Fresno State and learning about the things they're doing.
Volunteering for commencement ceremonies and seeing my students line up to walk the stage is always fun!
- I love the diversity and range of backgrounds, goals and aspirations that students in our college have. I also love how committed the ARCstars are to student success!



Lisa Vang

College of Social Sciences Advising Center

Nyob Zoo! (Hello) My name is Lisa Vang. I began my college journey as a first-generation student at Fresno State, where I pursued a double major in Psychology and Child Development. I later earned my Master's degree in Student Affairs and College Counseling, also from Fresno State. Born and raised in Fresno, I take immense pride in calling this city my home. I am invested in my community and love working at Fresno State, where I get to work with students from diverse backgrounds. It's deeply rewarding to build a partnership with students and witness their growth and development as they navigate higher education. One of the most fulfilling moments as an academic counselor is seeing our students cross the stage at graduation. It's a reminder of why I do this work!



Ross Whitton

College of Social Sciences Advising Center

I have been advising on campus for 12 years. Working with students and hearing their stories. Getting to see the student navigate the ups and downs of college and watching them grow into young adults is the most enjoyable thing of being an advisor.

My colleagues in the COSS Advising Center. I work with the best team on campus. They have really taught me the importance of self care and remembering that there is more to life than work. I am a better higher education professional because of them. I would have burned out of this job a lot faster if not for my colleagues. I appreciate all of them very much. I enjoy hanging out at home with my wife and 5 cats. I also enjoy watching any cooking shows with Gordan Ramsay. I like to play pickleball on the weekends, you can find me playing at Orchid Park.

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The final award goes to.....

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Congratulations to all of our
nominees and recipients!

Nominees and Recipients:
please come to the front to
take a picture

fresnostate.edu/can